NORTHWEST COMO S'MORE FUN PARENT HANDBOOK

CITY OF ST. PAUL DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

MISSION STATEMENT and PHILOSOPHY:

S'more Fun is a child-care / recreation program for school-aged children in grades K-6. Children enrolled in the Summer Program must have completed kindergarten.

Our goal is for these children to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, gain self-confidence, and build independence in a safe, comfortable, trusting and fun environment.

Qualified trained staff supervise all program activities. The maximum staff / child ratio is 1:15.

ENROLLMENT

Program size is limited at Northwest Como S'more Fun due to space limitations at our facility. You must register early as the program fills quickly.

Registration for the school-year takes place in the Spring before the school-year. Summer registration takes place in early spring.

Parents of newly enrolled children are required:

- 1. To pick-up materials that are needed.
- 2. To make an on-site visit to view the facilities and to determine if the program is appropriate for your child.
- 3. To offer time for parents and children to meet the staff.
- 4. To give the staff pertinent information concerning your child so that staff can provide appropriate care regarding unique circumstances (i.e. medical / health concerns/ behavioral). Any pertinent information disregarded about your child before or during enrollment may result in termination.
- 5. To complete registration forms and return registration fee before start date.

Children upon enrollment are required to sign up for a minimum of 3 days per week, per session. This does not apply to the summer contract.

REGISTRATION

All forms must be completely filled out, and registration fee paid, before your child is permitted to attend NW Como S'more Fun.

IF A PARENT'S WORK OR HOME PHONE NUMBER CHANGES AT ANY TIME DURING ENROLLMENT, PLEASE LET S'MORE FUN KNOW.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is encouraged in the S'more Fun program. If there is an issue you would like to discuss, please set up an appointment with the Program Coordinator (preferably during non-programming hours). All staff, including the Coordinator, are unable to spend quality time discussing your child during program hours when other children are present.

FEE PAYMENT POLICIES

S'more Fun is a non-profit program which operates solely on the fees paid by the parent(s) of enrolled children. Therefore, it is essential that your fees be paid promptly and regularly. FAILURE TO PAY FEES AND LATE PAYMENT OF FEES WILL RESULT YOUR CHILD'S TERMINATION FROM THE PROGRAM.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: City of St. Paul / N.W.C. – S'more Fun. It is important that checks be written this way, because there are several other S'more Fun programs throughout the City of St. Paul.

A \$10.00 charge will be added to your fees if they are not paid by the due date as stated on your Fee Contract. Fees are due the first Friday of a two-week period. For example, Fee #1 may be due on Friday, September 8 for the dates of September 5-15. Summer fees are due weekly.

Failure to pay 2 consecutive fee payments will result in a written warning in which you will have until the next fee payment to:

- A) pay all fees in full
- B) talk with the coordinator to arrange a fee payment plan in writing.

Failure to do (A) or (B) will result in written notification of your **immediate termination**. No warning letter will be issued the second time you miss 2 consecutive payments. You will automatically receive a written notice of your immediate termination.

Any financial concerns with the fee contract should be discussed with the Program Coordinator.

(cont.)

Administrative fees:

- -Your family will be charged a \$35 activity fee in the September, January, and the beginning of summer.
- -Field trip fees and busing will be posted in advance and the cost will be added onto your fees.
- -A \$5.00 fee for permanent schedule change.
- -Adding of extra days to the program:
- If requested in writing and approved prior to the day only a \$2.00 charge per day, otherwise a \$5.00 per day.

All fees must be paid in full by the end of each term. You will not be allowed to return until all fees owed are paid.

TERM 1

1st day of school - winter break

January - end of school year

Summer

If your child is ABSENT from the program, our budget demands that we must still collect a fee for that day. This includes all impromptu days, sick days, and any days in which your child is not in attendance for reasons such as a doctor or dentist appointment. Parents <u>may not</u> make adjustments in the amount of fees that are due by deducting days that are missed or crediting their payments.

S'more Fun will provide receipts for all payments made. It is your responsibility to save and keep track of your receipts for tax purposes. Receipts cannot be reissued or copied. S'MORE FUN RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RAISE FEES ACCORDING TO PROGRAM NEEDS.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

If you are using financial assistance reimbursements, the check must be sent directly to S'more Fun and made payable to City of St. Paul - NWC – S'more Fun. We will not sign any reimbursement forms until S'more Fun has been paid first. S'more Fun will be responsible for billing and receipts. It is your responsibility to save these receipts for tax purposes. NO YEAR-END TAX FORMS WILL BE GIVEN OUT.

Financial assistance is available to qualifying families through the following programs:

- 1. Resources for Child-Caring
- 2. Ramsey County Human Services

ATTENDANCE CHANGES

A written notice must be given at least two weeks in advance for termination from the program or changes in the enrollment schedule. Full fees will be charged without advance notice. For a family vacation, parents may remove their child from the program in full week increments (M-F) and not be charged a fee, providing advance notice of two weeks be given. There is a limit of two weeks of vacation allotted for the school year in which a fee may be excused. We cannot deduct single days. This policy does not apply to the summer program.

GUIDANCE / DISCIPLINE POLICY

S'more Fun staff will provide clear, reasonable limits for children's behavior and maintain them. Positive behaviors will be reinforced and negative behaviors identified and redirected. Children will be helped to recognize and identify their feelings as valid and acceptable. Staff members will intercede if a child's behavior is harmful to him / herself or others.

Every effort will be made to communicate and solve individual behaviors; however, S'more Fun reserves the right to ask any child to leave the program for his / her own betterment or the welfare of the group. The following are steps that will be taken as a result of negative / abusive behavior:

- 1. S'more Fun staff will discuss the behavior with the child, reiterate rules, problem solve how the child can be more responsible and find out if the child chooses to be more responsible. If necessary, a consequence will be used such as playing alone for awhile, a time-out, or other appropriate consequence. This situation may warrant an informal talk with the parent(s), or a note sent home.
- 2. At any time, a child may be suspended from the program for 1-3 days after any behavior which hurts children or staff continues to be inappropriate. Once the child returns, the behavior must be improved.
- 3. The child may be terminated from the S'more Fun program when the above steps have not worked or if the staff considers the behavior to be aggressive or dangerous to program participants.
- 4. S'more Fun reserves the right to terminate a child immediately from the program when his/her actions and/or behavior are so serious that steps 1-3 do not apply.

Parents are required to work with the S'more Fun staff in implementing this policy.

TERMINATION POLICY

By Parent: A written notice must be given at least two weeks in advance for termination from the program. Full fees will be charged when advance notice is not given.

By S'more Fun: Participation in the S'more Fun Program may be terminated immediately by the staff for the following reasons:

- 1. S'more Fun staff's decision that the program is not able to effectively serve the needs of a child or cope with a child's behavior pattern.
- 2. Late payments or non-payment of fees.
- 3. Parents who refuse to work cooperatively with staff OR failure by parents to abide by the policies or procedures outlined in the parent handbook. (At any time if a staff person is uncomfortable with a parent confrontation or a confrontation in front of children in the program, the parent will be notified immediately about the inappropriateness and will be advised to speak with the coordinator and/or supervisor to set up a meeting.)
- 4. Disrespect towards any of the S'more Fun staff.
- 5. Repeated late pick-up of a child.
- 6. Destruction of property. (Items broken will be replaced by the child/parents.)
- 7. Failure to provide information upon registration.

ADMITTANCE AND RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Arrival:

S'more Fun opens at 7:00 a.m. *Early arrivals (before 7 a.m.) will not be accepted due to legal responsibility.* Please be sure there is a staff person on-site before dropping off your child. In order for S'more Fun to accept legal responsibility, children must be signed in by a parent or authorized person.

***If your child is going to be absent, please call S'more Fun at 651-487-5626. Please DO NOT call the main office at Chelsea Heights regarding S'more Fun attendance. It is the parent's responsibility to call the program. S'more Fun staff is not responsible for calling the parent(s) in efforts to track down a child. Our program structure and staff ratios make this impossible. Please plan accordingly.

Departure:

Please verbally let the staff know when you pick up your child. Children must be signed out by a parent or authorized person by closing time.

Persons authorized to pick up your child:

At the time of enrollment, you must provide S'more Fun with the names of people who are / are not authorized to pick up your child. It is your responsibility to notify the staff of any changes in the names of people authorized and not authorized to pick up your child.

We will release children only to authorized persons, with your advance notification. If necessary, photo identification or other official identification may be required by the staff prior to releasing your child. If someone other than an authorized person you have indicated on the registration form is to pick up your child, please notify the staff in writing or by phone.

If there will be a minor or sibling signing out your child, written documentation must be on file in advance. Please consult with the staff for proper documentation.

NOTE: The S'more Fun staff must release to a non-custodial parent unless legal documents are provided to us preventing the release.

LATE PICK-UP

The S'more Fun staff love their jobs, but all have obligations outside of work, so please be on time picking up your child.

Parents will be charged \$10.00 for every 5 minutes past closing time. S'more Fun closes at 6:00 p.m. during the school year and 5:30 p.m. in the summer. For example, if you pick up your child at 6:06 p.m., the late fee will be \$20.00. All late pick-ups are logged by staff. Late fees will be added on to your fee contract and must be paid with the next posted payment.

If there is a problem and you know you will be late, please try to make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child. Notify the staff as to your lateness or that someone else will be picking up the child. A late pick up fee will still be assessed after closing time.

After closing time, your child will never be left alone without the supervision of a S'more Fun staff or Northwest Como Recreation staff. After closing time, if the S'more Fun staff has not heard from you, they will begin making phone calls in order to locate you or an authorized person to pick up your child. Under extreme circumstances, if the staff is unable to reach you or an authorized person, they will then call the police and / or proper authorities so that your child can be taken care of until you are able to pick up your child.

Each family will be given a five-minute grace period, one time. All late pick ups will be logged and late fees strictly enforced.

Questions, payments, clean-up, etc. must take place before closing time or late fees will apply.

HEALTH, ILLNESS, AND EMERGENCY POLICIES

IF A CHILD IS NOT IN SCHOOL DUE TO ILLNESS, HE/SHE CANNOT ATTEND S'MORE FUN.

- 1. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform S'more Fun in writing of any health or medical conditions relative to his/her child's participation in the program. This includes providing staff information about any infectious or communicable diseases or viruses.
- 2. A child should NOT be brought to school or S'more Fun if there is evidence of any type of illness or any infectious or communicable disease. When a communicable disease has been reported, all parents will be notified.
- 3. If a child becomes ill while at S'more Fun, the staff will contact the parents and ask that the child be picked up as soon as possible. It is required that the parent respond immediately, for protection and well-being of their child, as well as the other children and staff in the program. The child will be excluded from activities with other children and will be resting in a quiet area. Staffing does not allow us to attend to an ill child.
- 4. In the event of a medical emergency or accident, a S'more Fun staff person will remain with the injured or sick child at all times and administer first aid. Staff will attempt to contact parents or emergency persons. When necessary, 911 will be called and the child will be taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital. If the parents cannot be reached, staff will take whatever medical measures are necessary for the care and protection of the child.

The S'more Fun staff will inform the Recreation Center Director and the Division of Parks and Recreation of any emergencies or injuries. Accident reports will completed and on file with the Division.

5. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect will be reported to the proper authorities.

EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN

IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT IN ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL, HE/SHE CANNOT ATTEND S'MORE FUN THAT SAME DAY.

**It is the parent's responsibility to inform S'more Fun, as well as the school, of any infectious / contagious diseases and / or viruses.

See specific illnesses / exclusions on the next page.

MEDICATION

If a child is prescribed oral or surface medication which must be taken while at S'more Fun, WRITTEN PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER THE MEDICATION MUST BE GIVEN BY THE PARENT AND IN SOME CASES THE PHYSICIAN. The medication must be in the original container, properly labeled with the child's name, dates, and the amount and frequency of dosage. Forms may be obtained from the staff. Authorization is also needed for non-prescription medication (i.e. cough syrup, pain relievers, etc.).

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If severe weather is approaching (including **snow days**) during S'more Fun hours, parents will be notified through WCCO radio, television, or email listed under **NORTHWEST COMO**S'MORE FUN. If you do not have access to any of these resources please provide S'more Fun with the easiest way to reach you. Due to the high volume of calls we would have to make S'more Fun cannot call all parents. If danger is imminent, children will be brought to a safe area in the building. Staff will remain with the children until all children have been picked up. Please be alert when weather is changing and use these resource tools to be prepared. If you are unsure, you can call S'more Fun.

THERE WILL BE NO S'MORE FUN WHEN ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO WEATHER OR OTHER SIMILAR SITUATION. A fee is still required.

On days when school is starting later than usual due to weather, there will be no before-school program.

S'MORE FUN HAS THE RIGHT TO CLOSE THE PROGRAM EARLY DUE TO THE WEATHER. THIS WOULD BE DECIDED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE COORDINATOR, STAFF, AND OTHER S'MORE FUN PROGRAMS. IF WE REMAIN OPEN, PLAN AHEAD AND BE HERE BY CLOSING TIME. THE LATE POLICY WILL APPLY REGARDLESS OF THE WEATHER CONDITIONS.

SNACKS / FOOD / LUNCH

S'more Fun will serve snacks daily.

In the event that parents would like to celebrate a child's birthday, the staff would appreciate an opportunity to plan ahead for this event. State law requires only wrapped purchased food may be sent with your child to share with others. Please do not send hard candy such as suckers or jaw breakers.

<u>Lunches on Non-School Days:</u> S'more Fun does not provide plastic ware, microwave, or refrigeration (only for drinks and items subject to spoiling).

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

S'MORE FUN IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS. Space will be provided for your child's coat and bag. Children may not bring valuables or toys to the program unless it is a specified toy day. And when they do, it is at their own risk. Inappropriate toys/games/CD's or DVD's will not be allowed. Staff will determine appropriateness. **All items and clothing should be labeled with your child's name for easy identification.** The S'more Fun staff will make every effort to return labeled items directly to the child.

Clothing:

Unless it is raining or below zero temperatures, the children may spend some time outside every day and should be properly dressed for the weather. Children not properly dressed will be kept inside if staffing is available. White sole tennis shoes are preferred for the gym.

EQUIPMENT / SUPPLIES

If a child is being careless or disrespectful to any of S'more Fun items, that child/family will be required to replace said item.

NON-SCHOOL DAYS

S'more Fun is closed on all national holidays (depending when major holidays fall, we may be closed the day before and / or after, as well):

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Presidents' Day

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Veteran's Day (This is a city holiday but closure of the program varies from year to vear.)

Thanksgiving (and Friday after Thanksgiving)

Christmas Day

S'more Fun will also be closed on certain preparation days for fall and summer programming.

Non-school day contracts will be given out twice a year, once in September for non-school days in September through December and again in January for non-school days in January through May. Parents are responsible for signing their child/ren up for non-school days if care is needed. Non-school day contracts cannot be changed and fees must be collected according to the days your child/ren is signed up. On non-school days when S'more Fun is open (i.e. conferences, in services, winter break, etc), we need a minimum of children signed up. If S'more Fun does not meet the minimum required, S'more Fun will then be closed that particular day. You will be notified AT LEAST 2 weeks in advance if we do not meet our minimum numbers.

FIELD TRIPS

If your child absent on a field trip day they were signed up for, our budget still requires payment, including any extra field trip fee.

Please take notice of field trips and discuss them with your child. All children are expected to participate in field trips. Parents are responsible for additional cost of busing and field trips. NOTE: There may be days when your child must be at the program by a certain start time due to a special event or field trip. You will be notified of these times in advance. Staff cannot stay on site to wait for children who are scheduled to attend but are late or not present.

Appropriate behavior is expected on field trips. If a consequence is ineffective or the behavior is disruptive to the group, the parent will be responsible for picking up their child from the field trip.

A walking field trip form / emergency card must be on file for each child. Walking field trips will be frequent in the summer. Please make sure all phone numbers are up to date.

If your child is going to be absent or late, it is your responsibility to notify the S'more Fun staff. It is not the staff's responsibility to find out if your child will be attending. You can call NW Como S'more Fun at 651-487-5626. If there is no answer, please leave a message.

MONEY:

It is not recommended that children bring money to S'more Fun. However, if they choose to, they may purchase pop or treats from the Rec Center vending machines during the lunch hour ONLY on non-school days. On specified field trips, children may bring spending money, upon the discretion of each child's parent. EACH CHILD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN MONEY AND ANY ITEMS THAT THEY PURCHASE. CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE POCKETS OR A FANNY / WRIST PACK IN WHICH TO KEEP THEIR MONEY. STAFF WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MONEY.

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